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ABSTRACT

A comparison of median income since 1955 shows that the salary differential between men and women has increased in recent years. Although this is due primarily to the over-representation of women in low-skilled, low-paying jobs, even within the same occupations men are better paid. Salary comparisons for professional occupations show differentials by sex. (BH)

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
WAGE AND LABOR STANDARDS ADMINISTRATION
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# FACT SHEET ON THE EARNINGS GAP

A comparison of the median wage or salary incomes of women and men who work full time year round reveals not only that those of women are considerably less than those of men but also that the gap has widened in recent years. In 1955, for example, women's median wage or salary income of $2,719 was 64 percent of the $4,252 received by men. In 1968 women's median earnings of $4,457 were only 58 percent of the $7,664 received by men.

Wage or Salary Income of Full-Time Year-Round Workers, 1/
by Sex, 1955-68

| Year | Median wage or salary income | | Women's median wage or salary income as percent of men's |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Women | Men | |
| 1955 | $2,719 | $4,252 | 63.9 |
| 1956 | 2,827 | 4,466 | 63.3 |
| 1957 | 3,008 | 4,713 | 63.8 |
| 1958 | 3,102 | 4,927 | 63.0 |
| 1959 | 3,193 | 5,209 | 61.3 |
| 1960 | 3,293 | 5,417 | 60.8 |
| 1961 | 3,351 | 5,644 | 59.4 |
| 1962 | 3,446 | 5,794 | 59.5 |
| 1963 | 3,561 | 5,978 | 59.6 |
| 1964 | 3,690 | 6,195 | 59.6 |
| 1965 | 3,823 | 6,375 | 60.0 |
| 1966 | 3,973 | 6,848 | 58.0 |
| 1967 2/ | 4,150 | 7,182 | 57.8 |
| 1968 2/ | 4,457 | 7,664 | 58.2 |

1/ Worked 35 hours or more a week for 50 to 52 weeks.
2/ Data for 1967 and 1968 are not strictly comparable with prior years, since earnings of self-employed are included.

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census: Current Populations Reports, P-60.

This gap in earnings varies by major occupation group. It is largest for sales workers (women earn only 40 percent of what men earn) and smallest for professional and technical workers (women earn 66 percent of what men earn).

Median Wage or Salary Income of Full-Time Year-Round Workers, by Sex and Selected Major Occupation Group, 1968

| Major occupation group | Median wage or salary income | | Women's median wage or salary income as percent of men's |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Women | Men | |
| Professional and technical workers | $6,691 | $10,151 | 65.9 |
| Nonfarm managers, officials, and proprietors | 5,635 | 10,340 | 54.5 |
| Clerical workers | 4,789 | 7,351 | 65.1 |
| Sales workers | 3,461 | 8,549 | 40.5 |
| Operatives | 3,991 | 6,738 | 59.2 |
| Service workers (except private household) | 3,332 | 6,058 | 55.0 |

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census: Current Population Reports, P-60, No. 66.

Another measure of the gap in the earnings of women and men full-time year-round workers is a distribution of these workers by earnings intervals. For example, 20 percent of the women but only 8 percent of the men earned less than $3,000. Moreover, 60 percent of the women but only 20 percent of the men earned less than $5,000. At the upper end of the scale, only 3 percent of the women but 28 percent of the men had earnings of $10,000 or more.

Earnings of Full-Time Year-Round Workers, by Sex, 1968

| Earnings | Women | Men |
|---|---|---|
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Less than $3,000 | 20.0 | 7.5 |
| $3,000 to $4,999 | 40.0 | 12.6 |
| $5,000 to $6,999 | 26.0 | 21.3 |
| $7,000 to $9,999 | 10.9 | 30.9 |
| $10,000 to $14,999 | 2.5 | 19.5 |
| $15,000 and over | .4 | 8.2 |

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census: Current Population Reports, P-60, No. 66.

The previous figures do not necessarily indicate that women are receiving unequal pay for equal work. For the most part, they reflect the fact that women are more likely than men to be employed in low-skilled, low-paying jobs. For example:

In institutions of higher education, women are much less likely than men to be associate or full professors.

In the technical field, women are usually in the lowest category of draftsman or engineering technician.

Among managers and proprietors, women frequently operate a small retail establishment, while the men may manage a manufacturing plant or a wholesale outlet.

In the clerical field, women are usually the class B and men the higher paid class A accounting clerks. Among tabulating machine operators, also, women are concentrated at the lower level.

In cotton textile manufacturing, women are usually the battery hands, spinners, and yarn winders (the lowest paying jobs), while men are loom fixers, maintenance machinists, and card grinders.

Nevertheless, within some of these detailed occupations, men usually are better paid. For example, in institutions of higher education in 1965-66, women full professors had a median salary of only $11,649 as compared with $12,768 for men. Comparable differences were found at the other three levels as shown in the following table.

Median Annual Salaries of Teaching Staff in Colleges and Universities, by Sex, 1965-66

| Teaching staff | Number | | Median annual salary | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Women | Men | Women | Men |
| Total---------- | 26,734 | 118,641 | $ 7,732 | $ 9,275 |
| Professors---------- | 3,149 | 32,873 | 11,649 | 12,768 |
| Associate professors------ | 5,148 | 28,892 | 9,322 | 10,064 |
| Assistant professors------ | 8,983 | 37,232 | 7,870 | 8,446 |
| Instructors---------- | 9,454 | 19,644 | 6,454 | 6,864 |

Source: National Education Association: "Salaries in Higher Education, 1965-66," Research Report 1966-R 2, February 1966. (Copyright 1966, National Education Association. Reprinted by permission.)

Median salaries of women scientists in 1968 were from $1,700 to $4,500 a year less than those of all scientists in their respective fields. The greatest gap was in the field of chemistry, where the median annual salary of women was $9,000 as compared with $13,500 for all chemists. Additional details are given in the following table.

Median Annual Salaries of Full-Time Employed Civilian Scientists, by Field, 1968

| Field | Median annual salary | |
|---|---|---|
| | Total | Women |
| All fields | $13,200 | $10,000 |
| Chemistry | 13,500 | 9,000 |
| Earth and marine sciences | 12,900 | 9,500 |
| Atmospheric and space sciences | 13,400 | 11,300 |
| Physics | 14,000 | 10,200 |
| Mathematics | 13,000 | 9,400 |
| Computer sciences | 14,100 | 11,800 |
| Agricultural sciences | 11,000 | (1/) |
| Biological sciences | 13,000 | 9,900 |
| Psychology | 13,200 | 11,500 |
| Statistics | 14,900 | 12,000 |
| Economics | 15,000 | 12,000 |
| Sociology | 12,000 | 10,000 |
| Anthropology | 12,700 | 11,000 |
| Political science | 12,000 | 9,700 |
| Linguistics | 11,500 | 9,600 |

1/ Median not computed for groups with fewer than 25 registrants reporting salary.

Source: National Science Foundation: "National Register of Scientific and Technical Personnel." 1968.

The jobs and salaries expected to be offered by 206 companies to June 1970 college graduates were reported in a survey conducted in November 1969. There was a substantial spread in the offers to be made to men and women with the same college majors as indicated in the following table.

Expected Salaries for June 1970 College Graduates,
by Sex and Selected Field

| Field | Average monthly salary | |
|---|---|---|
| | Women | Men |
| Accounting | $746 | $832 |
| Chemistry | 765 | 806 |
| Economics, finance | 700 | 718 |
| Engineering | 844 | 872 |
| Liberal arts | 631 | 688 |
| Mathematics, statistics | 746 | 773 |

Source: Endicott, Frank S., Dr.: "Trends in Employment of College and University Graduates in Business and Industry." Northwestern University. 1970.

Surveys of average earnings for major office occupations made by the Bureau of Labor Statistics showed that in the period from July 1968 to June 1969 men's average weekly earnings were substantially higher than those of women among class A and class B accounting clerks and payroll clerks. For example, the weekly salary differential between the earnings of women and men class A accounting clerks ranged from $2.00 to $45.50 in the 88 important centers of business and industry surveyed regularly.



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